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ABSTRACT

A study evaluated the effectiveness of the second year of the first-grade teachers in becoming more effective at working with students who are at-risk of failing to develop the reading and writing performance expectancies the teachers held for them. Subjects, a first-grade teacher and a resource teacher from each of 4 schools in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, responded to a 15-question survey administered one-to-one concerning the processes used to accomplish the goals stipulated for Year Two of the project. Interview data were organized into 10 topic areas: (1) meetings; (2) professional skills; (3) university personnel; (4) inner city initiative and principal support; (5) classroom teacher-resource teacher relationships; (6) R/WI classroom activities; (7) R/WI expansion activities; (8) student progress; (9) school and classroom conditions needing change or improvement; and (10) continuation of the project. Results indicated that while there were some minor problems in the project, overall it was a success. Thirty recommendations were presented based on the interview data. (The teacher interview instrument is attached.) (RS)

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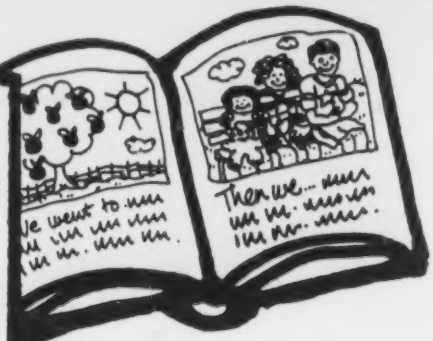

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READING/WRITING IMMERSION: A DECISION MAKING LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

TEACHER INTERVIEWS

YEAR TWO

MAY 31, 1991

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A Collaborative Project of

The Winnipeg Core Area Initiative, Manitoba Education and Training, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg School Division No. 1, and St. James-Assiniboia School Division No. 2.

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READING/WRITING IMMERSION: A DECISION MAKING LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

TEACHER INTERVIEWS
YEAR TWO

INTRODUCTION

The Reading/Writing Immersion (R/WI) Project, approved for the four schools of Brooklands, David Livingstone, William Whyte, and Dufferin, officially began on September 14, 1989. The Project was designed to assist Grade One teachers in becoming more effective at working with students who are "at-risk" of failing to develop the reading and writing performance expectancies the teachers held for them. Since one of the purposes of the Project was to promote it throughout the four schools, a resource teacher from each school was identified by the principal to take part. In these four schools, resource teachers function as collaborative, school-based consultants. It was envisioned that the consultative-collaborative nature of their role would serve to build an ethos, or climate for collective language arts efforts in each school. Collegial consultation efforts were perceived as one way of pooling and effectively multiplying the knowledge base and skills stemming from the Project. Therefore, a total of four Grade One teachers, four resource teachers, and three University of Manitoba, Faculty of Education professors took part in the R/WI Project during the 1989/91 school years.

The Project is made up of four components. First, a study group component, which took place between September, 1989 and December, 1989. This component was conducted at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, and involved the presentation and discussion of issues related to the teaching of reading and writing skills.

Second, an applied component took place between January, 1990 and June, 1990. In this component participants utilized their newly developed skills in their classrooms with

students they identified as being at-risk of not meeting reading/writing performance expectancies. Another aspect of the applied component involved the participants observing each other in the classroom setting. This allowed the teachers to view the modeling of a variety of teaching techniques. The observation sessions were also utilized to provide participants with constructive feedback regarding their instruction and to assist with the analysis of student performance.

The third component took place during Year Two of the Project (1990-91) and consisted of the extension of R/WI into additional classrooms in each of the schools. The participants from the four schools had made specific plans during Year One as to how they would approach the process of Project extension. The overall plan stipulated that there would be a major decrease in the involvement of the University staff during Year Two and, as a result, they played a much less active role during 1990-91. That is, during Year Two they acted as consultants, becoming involved only when requested by school staff. The schools took over complete responsibility for all aspects of the R/WI Project.

The fourth component will take place during the 1991-92 school year and will continue the process of Project extension. At the time this report was written, each of the four schools was making specific plans for the continuation of this process. Year Three is the final year of the R/WI Project and will include a further reduction of the involvement of the University staff.

An important aspect of the Project was that it was designed to operate as a collaborative model. That is, all of the participants were to work together to design the form the Project would take. Two basic assumptions were that (1) effective teachers are competent "decision makers" and (2) future professional growth is dependent on teachers' ability to monitor or reflect on their teaching performance. Therefore, the study group component of the Project was not the traditional lecture style university class. The study

group established meeting agendas, selected topics for discussion, conducted book study sessions, scheduled book fairs, developed cooperative reporting procedures and designed other joint activities. In these sessions the University personnel acted as facilitators. A second aspect of the collaborative approach was that it allowed each school to develop their own unique program based on the specific characteristics of their school community.

One funding condition was that the Project be evaluated. Therefore, an evaluation plan was designed and accepted by the Project's two Management Committees (see Evaluation Outline, October 12, 1989). This plan called for a process evaluation (an examination of Project implementation) during the first year of operation and an outcome evaluation (the effect of the Project on students) to take place during the second year. A two-part design was selected as it allowed for complete Project implementation prior to the assessment of student outcomes. The University staff were assigned the responsibility of carrying out the process evaluation. The Program Evaluation Officer from Manitoba Education and Training's Inner City Initiative Branch and the Research Department of the Winnipeg School Division #1 were responsible for the outcome evaluation.

Year One Evaluation.

Year One evaluation consisted of (a) four classroom teacher/resource teacher surveys, (b) two principal interviews, (c) an ethnographic component which provided a record of the classroom observations and study group sessions, and (d) two interviews with the University professors who acted as Project facilitators.

The results of the evaluation were presented in two reports:

1. Bravi, G.D., Madak, P.R., & Kilarr, G. (1990). Reading/Writing Immersion: A Decision Making Literacy Development Project - Final Report: Year 1.

2. Bravi, G.D., Madak, P.R. & Kilarr, G. (1990). An Addendum To: Reading/Writing Immersion: A Decision Making Literacy Development Project - Fourth Teacher Survey And Summary Year 1.

Year Two Evaluation.

In Year Two, two personnel changes occurred . First, as commonly occurs in school divisions, there were personnel changes at three of the schools. Both Brooklands School and Dufferin School were assigned new resource teachers. Additionally, at David Livingstone School the resource teacher who had been involved during Year One was assigned a role that minimized her contact with the R/WI classroom teacher.

Second, two University professors were on half-year sabbatical leaves. One remained an active Project participant, but the other had made sabbatical plans that did not allow for such involvement.

As planned, the University staff continued with the process component of the evaluation, and the Program Evaluation Officer from Manitoba Education and Training's Inner City Initiative Branch and the Research Department of the Winnipeg School Division #1 initiated the outcome evaluation of student progress.

The process component of the Year Two evaluation was conducted by interviewing the eight participating teachers. This document provides a summary of the teacher interviews.

METHOD

The methodology used for the Year Two process evaluation was a teacher interview. As Year Two was made up of only one major component, it was decided that a single data collection point would provide the necessary information. It was also determined that a one-to-one interview would provide more detailed data than would a paper-and-pen survey.

Instrument.

The interview schedule was designed to collect data about the processes used to accomplish the goals stipulated for Year Two of the Project. The design of the interview schedule was a joint effort which involved the University staff, members of Inner City Initiative Branch, and personnel from the Research Department of Winnipeg School Division #1, Research Department. In order to ensure that the wording of the questions was clear, the interview schedule was piloted on four teachers who were not Project participants. No changes were made in the instrument. A copy of the interview schedule is presented in Appendix A.

Procedure.

All eight of the Project participants were interviewed by a research assistant hired by the University staff. While the interviewer was not directly involved with the Project, she was familiar with the it, and was known and trusted by the participants.

With the exception of one, all interviews were conducted during the last two weeks in April and the first week in May, 1991. Due to extenuating circumstances, the eighth interview did not take place until the third week of May, 1991. In order to establish interview times that were convenient for the participants, the interviewer called each individual and allowed them to set the meeting time. The interviews were between fifty-five and seventy minutes in length.

Each participant was asked if they would allow the interviewer to tape the interview. They were assured that only the interviewer would have access to the tapes and that the only purpose for taping was to ensure accuracy. In addition to the tape recording, the interviewer took written notes. The tapes were then transcribed and a written report was provided to the authors of this document. As promised, neither the University staff,

Inner City Initiative Branch staff, Winnipeg School Division #1 officials, nor St. James-Assiniboia School Division #2 officials had access to the taped interviews.

TEACHER INTERVIEW RESULTS

All eight of the Project participants agreed to be interviewed and to have the interview taped. In order to facilitate the reader's understanding of the interview data, the authors organized the results into ten topic areas.

For some questions the data were best organized by school. In order to maintain school anonymity the numbers and letters used to designate school data were randomly assigned for each question.

Meetings.

Meetings of the original R/WI participants were once again an integral part of the Project. Although the original grant did not include such meetings for Year Two, at the end of Year One the participants concluded that it would be desirable if they continued to hold monthly meetings. Therefore, on their own initiative, they obtained a grant which allowed them to continue meeting on a monthly basis. The University staff were not involved in this grant, and attended meetings only when invited by the group.

Though these meetings were not part of the original grant, the evaluators felt it important that information be collected about them. Questions 1-4 addressed important issues regarding the meetings.

1. With regard to Year Two R/WI group meetings, what might have been done during Year One to improve the quality of these meetings? [e.g., Would it have helped if a schedule for Year Two had been drawn up last year?]

Only two participants answered the main question. All participants, however, addressed the example provided (i.e., Would it have helped if a schedule for Year Two had

been drawn up last year?). The two participants who responded to the main question expressed an overall general satisfaction with the quality of the meetings.

With regards to the example given as part of the question, all four classroom teachers stated that developing a schedule for Year Two meetings, at the end of Year One, would not have been helpful. Two teachers stated that it made sense to establish meeting agendas one month in advance. One responded that "I think we had to make our own agenda and determine ourselves what we wanted to cover" and another commented that she "...felt that meetings were a lot better than last year".

Three of the resource teachers, however, felt that establishing a schedule would have been helpful. One felt that the group was more focussed in the first year of the Project and stated that it would have been beneficial if the topics for Year Two had been predetermined. She also thought that it would have saved group time if individuals had been given the responsibility for presenting certain topics. A second resource teacher thought the group "floundered" at the first two meetings and that some previously set purposes might have helped. She added, however, that it would have been unnecessary to have planned all agendas ten months in advance.

Another resource teacher noted that she wasn't part of the Project during Year One and felt unable to respond to the question.

2. If you had a chance to improve the organization of the group meetings, what would you change to bring about this improvement?

All respondents commented that the organization of the meetings could have been improved. The following concerns were expressed:

a. meetings did not follow agreed upon agendas and the participants tended to get off-task (3 respondents);

b. the new members of the group had not been properly informed about the Project's focus, purpose and direction (3 respondents);

c. the use of a rotating chairperson was not entirely successful (2 respondents), however, one respondent thought the use of a rotating chairperson was very effective;

d. meetings should have had a more theoretical focus (i.e., more book studies and critiquing of research/materials) (2 respondents);

e. group was better organized this year than last (1 respondent); and,

f. personnel changes and philosophical differences often made it difficult to achieve consensus, but we have developed the ability to deal with these problems (1 respondent).

3. Given that this was a collaborative Project, were you satisfied with the role you played in organizing and developing agendas for the group meetings? Please provide a rationale for your answer.

Seven participants expressed satisfaction with the role they played in organizing and developing meeting agendas. Their feelings were best expressed by the following quote". . .no individual was the manager or leader, it was our group!" However, participants provided the following comments about problems encountered in establishing a collaborative meeting environment:

a. didn't feel that the rest of the group wanted to do some of the things she wanted to do, therefore, she kept these to herself (1 respondent);

b. difficult working with two school divisions (1 respondent); and

c. due to differing ideas, a substantial amount of time was needed to achieve consensus (1 respondent).

One participant felt dissatisfied with the role she played and thought that participants were working from different knowledge bases.

4. Many things were discussed in the group meetings. Please comment on the value of the content of those discussions [i.e., were the once-a-month meetings worth the time you were away from school?].

In general, the participants felt the content of the meetings was valuable, worthwhile or helpful. However, the content of some was seen to be more valuable than others. Group members made the following positive comments about meeting content:

a. the strategy sharing sessions were valuable (7 respondents);

b. miscue analysis sessions were very helpful (4 respondents); and,

c. valuable meeting goals were established and met (1 respondent).

Some negative comments were made:

a. some meetings were problematic due to the competitive behavior of some participants (3 respondents);

b. during the last two months, time might have been better spent half in group meetings and half at home school (1 respondent);

c. some difficulties implementing the strategies discussed in the meetings were due to differences in teacher expectations for students and perceived differences in student ability (1 respondent); and,

d. there were times when a whole day was spent accomplishing what could have been accomplished in half a day (1 respondent).

Summary. - Consensus was that the meetings were valuable, worthwhile or helpful, however, at times the participants noted that they encountered some difficulties. Strategy sharing was an activity that was seen as being of particular value and is mentioned in several sections of this report. The participants also seemed to feel responsible for their own destiny and welcomed that responsibility.

Most complaints about the meetings were related to establishing agendas and staying on task once these had been established.

Professional Skills.

In Year One, the study group component, held at the Faculty of Education, was designed to present and discuss issues, attitudes and skills related to the teaching of reading and writing. It was in this component that the majority of the new instructional techniques were presented. The use of these techniques was honed during site visitations and group observations. The original grant did not include such meetings for Year Two of the Project.

During Year Two, the participants obtained a grant which allowed them to hold group meetings designed to continue idea sharing and group problem solving. These meetings constituted the only organized professional development activity for 1990-91. Therefore, the authors felt it necessary to explore the skill development which took place during the year.

5. Has the Project provided you with any new skills this year? If so, what are they?

Seven participants indicated that they had acquired new skills during Year Two of the Project. Comments made indicated that many participants felt that they had developed new attitudes as well. The following were noted as skills or attitudes acquired during Year Two:

a. developed the ability to observe and assess individual differences in relationship to reading and writing skills - this made me more aware of what my kids could do and where they needed to go next (3 respondents);

b. most skills were learned during Year One of the Project, but Year Two helped to fine tune or hone them (2 respondents);

c. skills for implementing sound-symbol relationships in the reading process were developed (2 respondents);

d. developed my repertoire of things to do with small groups (2 respondents);

e. I'm using silent reading time in a much different way than in previous years - students read small books to adult volunteers and we keep track of what is read and how well; students have read much more than in the past (1 respondent);

f. provided me with a benchmark to have some idea as to what a Grade One child is capable of doing (1 respondent);

g. I have more confidence in dealing with and discussing issues with my peers, and am more comfortable/secure with my own philosophy of teaching (1 respondent); and,

h. professionally I have become more tolerant of individual differences with our group membership (1 respondent).

One participant stated that she had not learned anything new during Year Two. The individual did not elaborate.

Summary. - Participant responses indicated that the "teacher-as-decision-maker" goal of the Project is becoming a reality. Growth in self-confidence, professional skills and the tolerance of individual differences are all evident, and these changes represent the development of abilities necessary to making effective instructional change.

University Personnel.

As noted earlier, there was a major decrease in the involvement of the University staff during Year Two. In 1990-91, they acted as consultants becoming involved only when requested by school staff. University personnel were available on request to help with the extension of the program to other interested school staff, provide resources and technical assistance to R/WI participants, and conduct the process evaluation. The schools took over complete responsibility for all aspects of the R/WI Project. University staff were invited to four of the monthly meetings held by the R/WI participants. Other activities included:

- multiple visits to two school sites;
- providing one school with assistance in writing the year end evaluation report;
- providing one participant with assistance in preparing a conference presentation;
- providing materials to assist in publicizing the Project;
- conferring with the Program Evaluation Officer from Manitoba Education and Training's Inner City Initiative Branch and the Research Department of the Winnipeg School Division #1 regarding the Project's evaluation process;
- providing professional materials and information to participants in the Project and other schools/school divisions; and,
- observing and providing advice regarding individual student problems.

Furthermore, University personnel continued to serve as members of the St. James-Assiniboia School Division #2 and Winnipeg School Division #1 Management Committees which involved planning for Project and school division needs.

6. University personnel played a different role in Year One than in Year Two, please comment regarding this difference. [e.g., Were you satisfied with the amount of contacts? In retrospect, would you have changed anything for Year Two?]

Four Project participants stated that they would have liked University personnel to have regularly attended group meetings. In addition, three of the four stated that they appreciated the expertise and ideas presented by the University personnel when they did attend the group meetings. They made particular mention of the session on Miscue Analysis. Other comments included:

a. would have preferred more school based contact than attendance at group meetings (3 respondents);

b. "what they really wanted to do was to talk to _____ about their kids - they wanted to talk to him about their particular kids and have a dialogue back and forth, at the expense of the other people" (1 respondent);

c. "felt that I should invite profs to class, but things became too hectic - too busy doing your own thing," therefore, I did not invite them until later in the year" (1 respondent);

d. "felt profs were very approachable - they came out if we wanted them to" (1 respondent);

e. "enjoyed the second year more due to increased comfort level with the profs....felt they valued what I had to say....more exciting" (1 respondent);

f. "felt that in a lot of ways that the meetings worked better this year than last - teachers as a group were focused and organized - last year we wandered around too much without structure - I realize that they did not want to give us too much guidance, but as a result meetings lacked structure" (1 respondent); and,

g. "learned more about reading and writing processes from the profs than I did from other group members" (1 respondent).

7. **What role do you feel the University personnel should play during the third year of the Project?**

All eight participants stated that they felt that the University staff should play a consultative role. Comments made by the participants included:

a. be available to visit classrooms and share ideas concerning individual students (6 respondents);

b. be available to give advice when writing reports and to help with student evaluations and analysis to make a better program (2 respondents);

c. be involved in promoting the Project to other staff members (2 respondents);

d. offer a course in emergent literacy (1 respondent); and,

e. recommend making a schedule in September for specific dates (perhaps once every three months) for University personnel to visit schools (1 respondent).

Summary. - Even though there were a number of contradictory suggestions concerning University involvement, it is obvious that the participants want them to become more involved at the classroom level. The participants stated that they felt comfortable interacting with the University staff and did not feel threatened by their presence in either the meetings or their classrooms. We believe these feelings stem from the fact that the University staff have served as individual sounding boards for the teachers rather than as authorities having control or power over them and their programs.

Finally, half of the teachers noted that the University staff should have been regular participants in the group meetings. However, even when discussing group meeting attendance, the participants stated that they felt it was more important that University staff visit their classrooms.

Inner City Initiative and Principal Support.

All change requires the support of those having direct control over the program and program staff. This section of the evaluation collected participant perceptions of this support.

8. What is your opinion of the support the R/WI Project received from Inner City and your principal in Year Two?

Six Project members stated that the support provided by the Inner City Initiative Branch was excellent, another stated that they were satisfied with the support. Three participants emphasized the importance of the support provided by the Inner City Initiative Consultant. It was noted that she was always available when needed. Two individuals also indicated that they couldn't have accomplished what they did without the financial support for materials.

Six participants indicated some dissatisfaction with the support they received from their school administration. This group all noted that they would have liked their principals to be more involved. Some commented that they would like them to be more visible, to provide more in-school support for the Project, and to take the time to discuss the program with them.

It is interesting to note that two other Project members, from different schools, stated that their administrators were extremely supportive. One participant noted that support was provided through the reallocation of other staff members to assist with the Project.

Summary. - A high level of satisfaction was expressed for the support provided by the Inner City Initiative Branch, however, there was a desire for more active support on the part of school administrators.

Classroom Teacher - Resource Teacher Relationships.

Two forms of collaboration were critical to this Project. First, the participating resource teachers were to promote the use of R/WI strategies at all grade levels by consulting and collaborating with any teacher requesting assistance in the areas of reading and writing.

Second, the participants (i.e., the classroom teacher and the resource teacher) from each school were to work together to design the specific direction the Project would take in their school. The ability of the classroom teacher and the resource teacher to work collaboratively was of particular concern during Year Two of the Project, therefore, the following questions explored this relationship.

9. Cooperative and collaborative partnership between participating classroom teachers and resource teachers was built into the R/WI Project. Please comment on this cooperation and collaboration with regards to the following areas.

a. Do you feel that you have been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with your partner?

Six participants responded "no" to this question. Four of these respondents commented that too much time outside of school hours and during teacher preparation time was needed in order to collaborate effectively. In one instance the resource teacher was not assigned to the Grade One area and as a result it was difficult for the two teachers to find adequate time to collaborate. In fact, the teacher stated that the only time they met was during the monthly group meetings.

Two participants stated that they had been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with their partners. It should be noted that these two participants worked in different schools.

b Describe the role that each of you played in the Project, and how these roles were determined.

As this Project emphasizes the teacher-as-decision-maker, the participants at each school were expected to determine the nature of the Project at that site. They also established the role each played. Many variations occurred. As a result, the data is best understood when organized according to school.

School #1. The classroom teacher at this site took the leading role due to the fact that the resource teacher was new to the Project. They shared responsibility for the observations and assessments used to determine who would be selected for the R/WI Project in their school. Each took turns working with the R/WI group or with the rest of the class. They rotated the group they worked with every two days. Finally, they worked together to develop the year end evaluation report.

The roles for the participants at this school were determined prior to the arrival of the new resource teacher.

School #2. The classroom teacher's role was to continue the R/WI program in her room with some support from another resource teacher. The resource teacher worked to extend the program into the Grade Two area. Both worked on the year end evaluation report.

The classroom teacher's role at this school was developed by the classroom teacher and the resource teacher. According to both of the participants at this school, the principal determined the role played by the resource teacher.

School #3. In this school, the classroom teacher worked with Grade One and Two teachers to extend the Project. She also was responsible for determining the members of her R/WI group. Most of the time, the resource teacher worked with the classroom teacher's R/WI group outside of the regular classroom. On occasion, she and the classroom teacher worked with the whole class. They collaboratively wrote the end of year evaluation report.

Through discussion, the classroom teacher and resource teacher determined their roles.

School #4. The classroom teacher at this site took the leading role due to the fact that the resource teacher was new to the Project. Each participant worked separately with their own R/WI group while a third teacher worked with the rest of the class. Even though the classroom teacher and the resource teacher both carried out assessments, the classroom teacher's perceptions determined who were ultimately included in the R/WI groups. As with the other three schools, they jointly developed the year end evaluation report.

The roles for the participants at this school were determined prior to the arrival of the new resource teacher.

c. How successful do you feel the consultative - collaborative aspect of the Project has been? Please provide a rationale for this judgment.

Six Project members felt that the consultative - collaborative aspect of the Project had been very successful. Typical comments included:

i. "I found it beneficial to have another staff member you always knew you could always rely on.....to discuss strategies, to collaborate with to decide if we really were having success, and to develop evaluation procedures.";

ii. "..it is an easy and powerful thing to share ideas, teach each other things, help modify someone else's thinking....to form opinions about things with someone else's direction....the resource teacher provided me with quiet, understated guidance which I was ready to hear."; and,

iii. "the collaborative - consultative aspect of R/WI was very successful because it was a continuation of what the resource program already does in this school."

The other two participants (who worked in the same school), because of role changes, were unable to consult and collaborate during Year Two of the Project. Even though these two respondents were unable to work together this year, they had positive statements to make concerning the consultative -collaborative aspect of the Project.

i. "I see R/WI as a very powerful way of assessing kids and building programs based on that assessment."; and,

ii. "the resource teacher was a great support to me with report writing and evaluation, therefore I learned from her even though she wasn't in my classroom."

d. If you were starting Year Two over, would you make any changes to the partnership? If yes, what changes would you make?

Six participants stated that they would like to see the partnership remain unchanged. However, three made minor suggestions for modifications. These modifications were:

i. "I would like to begin to identify the kids earlier, and start a little earlier with R/WI.";

ii. "would have liked more meeting time with the classroom teacher."; and,

iii. "I would explain the program better to the new resource teacher. This would have made it simpler - we should have met more often in the beginning."

The other two participants (who worked in the same school), because of role changes, were unable to consult and collaborate during Year Two of the Project. As a result, they both stated that they would make changes to the partnership. Each stated that they would like to have the resource teacher in the classroom on a daily bases.

Summary. - There was overwhelming support for the collaborative aspect of the Project . The participants felt that collaboration helped to produce the outcomes they desired and provided them with a partner they could trust. The majority suggested that no changes be made to the collaborative relationship, however, two participants suggested minor changes.

The data also indicated that there were few commonalties to the collaborative relationship established at each school. In all but one school, the roles of the participants were developed through collaboration, and in all four schools, the participants cooperated in writing the year end report. Otherwise, the joint effort at each school led to unique developments that seemed to reflect that particular context.

The only negative responses were directed at the lack of time available for consultation and collaboration with their partner. The Project members noted that collaboration was essential, but that if they had had more time they could have been more effective.

In the opinion of the University staff, the data supported the idea that the more active the participants are in making school level decisions, the better the odds for continued action and support after the Project initiators leave the scene.

R/WI Classroom Activities.

At the end of Year One of the Project, the participants at each school develop their plan for Year Two. Included in these plans were (a) the R/WI activities to be used during Year Two, (b) who (i.e., whole class, select group, or both) would be exposed to these procedures, (c) how those to be exposed would be selected, and (c) whether or not the R/WI student group would change or remain static. The following questions collected data concerning the implementation of this aspect of the plans.

10.a. Are you using R/WI activities with your whole class, a select group, or both?

At each school, Project members stated that R/WI activities were being used with both the whole class and a select group. At some sites, the classroom teacher was working with the whole class and the resource teacher with a small group, or vice versa. One of the respondents noted that "R/WI activities are done with the whole group, on a daily basis, all of the time. R/WI isn't something so different that it is compartmentalized and all by itself; it blends into everything we do."

One participant stated that she always worked with small groups and another stated that she always worked with the whole class ". . .because everyone should benefit from excellent strategies." However, both of these participants' partners stated that they used R/WI activities with both the whole class and small groups.

10.b. If with the whole class, describe these activities. Do these activities differ from those used last year, and if so how?

The participants who indicated that the whole class was involved in R/WI activities used many diverse activities. Two activities were mentioned more often than all others: (a) six stated that they use writing as a process strategies and (b) five reported using shared reading strategies. Other activities mentioned by more than one participant were:

a. cut up sentences (3 respondents);

b. big books (3 respondents);

c. phonics (i.e., letter sounds, letter combinations and blends) (3 respondents);

d. writing predictable stories using frames of familiar text (2 respondents);

e. used Sunshine Book Series for reading activities (2 respondents);

f. chart stories/pocket charts (2 respondents);

g. language experience activities (2 respondents); and,

h. vocabulary skills (2 respondents).

Two participants stated that the activities used in Year Two of the Project did not differ from those of the previous year. Three participants noted that they made program adaptations in Year Two because this year's students differed from last year's. Another indicated that her program changed because materials ordered last year finally arrived. The two new participants stated that they were unable to answer this question.

10.c. If with a select group, how many children are you working with in your classroom this year? How did you select them?

School A. - At this school the selection criteria were: (a) a teacher made letter identification test; (b) teacher judgment of the students' oral reading skills; (c) daily anecdotal records; (d) a teacher made sound-symbol relationship test; and, (e) records on early writing attempts. Student scores were weighted and an at-risk group identified. However, even though there were more at-risk students identified, the participants at this school decided it would be best to limit group size to two students.

At the end of twelve weeks a second group was selected using the same criteria. This also consisted of two students.

School B. - Selection criteria used at this site consisted of: (a) a modified version of the Whole Language Behavior Inventory: Kindergarten - Grade One; and, (b) Marie Clay's Letter Identification Test.

The teachers organized the data to determine the lowest functioning students. From this group they selected the oldest students and those they felt most likely to continue attending the school.

There were three, ten week sessions and a total of ten students participated.

School C. - The selection criteria for the first group selected included: (a) Marie Clay's Concepts of Print Test and Letter Identification Test; (b) a teacher-made test for sight reading skills; (c) a teacher-made letter identification test; (d) a teacher-made test for initial consonant sounds; (e) general classroom observations; and, (f) teacher evaluation of writing samples.

The second group was selected solely on the basis of teacher observations. The participants stated that their judgments were "quite subjective" and that "no sophisticated testing was used."

In addition to the above procedures, the classroom teacher and the resource teacher conferred at the end of each week of the selection process. This was done to arrive at consensus.

From what was said, it appears that there were six students in the first group and four in the second group, one of whom was carried over from the first group.

School D. - Five selection criteria were used: (a) a modified version of the Whole Language Behavior Inventory: Kindergarten - Grade One; (b) a teacher-made spelling test; (c) a teacher-made letter recognition test; (d) a teacher-made sight words (number words); and, (e) a teacher-made phonics test.

Two groups of three students were chosen.

10.d. Has group membership changed during the year? Why or why not?

All Project members stated that group membership changed during the year. The following reasons were given for these changes:

i. student mastery of objectives (4 schools);

ii. group membership changed because students move out of school area (2 schools);

iii. new students arrived in the school who needed attention and there "...was no other way for them to get it." (1 school); and,

iv. student illness resulted in changes in R/WI working group (1 school).

10.e. Describe the R/WI activities that you used with this group? Do these activities differ from those used last year, and if so how?

At each school, participants stated that the R/WI activities used with the whole class were merely modified for use with identified students. Participants at three sites also noted that this year's activities differed slightly from those used last year. Their comments pointed to the fact that more emphasis was placed on reading activities. This was probably due to the fact that the reading materials ordered in Year One finally arrived.

One participant felt that she had a better idea of why particular activities were used and this resulted in the use of different activities. Another indicated that she modified the activities used last year in order to fit the needs of this year's students.

Summary. - All sites indicated that they were providing R/WI activities for the whole class and a select group of students. A wide variety of activities were being used. Writing as a process and shared reading strategies were mentioned by a majority of the participants. The activities that were used for the whole class were often modified for use with selected R/WI students.

A number of Project members noted that this year's activities differed from last year's due to differences in student needs. Other comments suggested that in Year Two participants placed more emphasis on reading activities. Other program changes were related to the arrival of Project funded materials.

Though none of the schools used identical student selection criteria, there were similarities. A letter identification test and teacher observations were used at all sites. Three sites used a sound/symbol relationship test. Analysis of writing samples, oral reading ability, and subjective teacher judgements were each used at two sites.

At three sites, two select groups were cycled through the R/WI process and at the fourth site, three groups were involved in the Project. Group size varied from two to six students, and some students were involved in more than one cycle. The most common

explanation for changes in group membership was student mastery of objectives. At some sites student mobility created difficulties.

Though not a part of this question, it should be noted that students in other classes and at other grade levels were also included in R/WI activities. The extension of the Project will be discussed in greater depth in the next section.

R/WI Expansion Activities.

As stated in the Introduction, the third component of this Project consisted of the extension of R/WI into additional classrooms in each of the schools. The participants from the four schools had made specific plans during Year One as to how they would approach the process of Project extension. The following questions collected data concerning the implementation of this aspect of the plans.

11.a. Describe the R/WI activities you and your counterpart have carried out in additional classroom(s) in your school.

All Project members reported that they were carrying out activities designed to extend the Project into other classrooms within their school. Reported extension activities included:

i. worked directly with children in other classrooms (6 respondents);

ii. holding monthly meetings with teachers interested in R/WI (2 respondents);

iii. use R/WI strategies with all language arts referrals (2 respondents);

iv. modified R/WI techniques to meet the different need in different classrooms (2 respondents);

v. allowing teachers interested in R/WI to observer their teaching (1 respondent);

vi. made myself available for consultation with other staff who were part of the expansion of the Project (1 respondent);

vii. development of a home reading program (1 respondent); and,

viii. followed up kids from last year once per cycle ((1 respondent).

11.b. How many other teachers have you worked with; and what grade level[s] do these teachers work?

Each of the schools expanded the Project in a slightly different manner. What follows is the information concerning the grade levels and number of teachers involved at each of the schools.

School A. - At this school the expansion took place with two additional Grade One teachers, two Grade Two teachers, a teacher in a Grade Two/Three split, and a Grade Three teacher.

School B. - This school expanded the Project to another Grade One classroom and a Grade Two classroom.

School C. - At this school the Project was expanded to a Grade One classroom and two Grade Two classrooms. In addition, the resource teacher introduced the R/WI Project to all teachers who requested Language Arts assistance.

School D.- The expansion of R/WI took place to another Grade One classroom, a Grade Two classroom and one Kindergarten classroom.

11.c. Do you feel that you have been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with other teachers?

Five participants reported that they had been give adequate time to consult and collaborate with other teachers. The comments made by the participants included:

a. yes, consultation time was supported by administration and written into our schedules (1 respondent);

b. yes, but feels longer and less frequent meetings are needed (1 respondent);

c. yes, but I haven't had time to work with the other teacher's kids (1 respondent);

d. no, meeting once per month, but should meet once per week (1 respondent);

e. no, feels there needs to be mutual preparation time built into schedules (1 respondent); and,

f. no, other teachers appeared to feel that classroom teacher's input was beneficial, but classroom teacher feels uncomfortable giving advice to teachers at other grade levels (1 respondent).

11.d. Describe the R/WI services you have provided to the teacher(s) and children [e.g., observing; ideas; etc.]

All of the participants described R/WI services that they provided to the expansion teachers and children:

a. provided direct instruction to students (4 respondents);

b. involved in in-school professional development (4 respondents);

c. shared R/WI strategies with teachers who referred children to Resource (2 respondents);

d. "gave teachers the opportunity to work with small groups while I took their class, but teachers had a hard time doing this, therefore, I spent most of my time working with the small groups" (1 respondent); and,

e. "made up a book of strategies and made it available to all staff (housed in school library) that seemed to be "sensible" to school context" (1 respondent).

One of the participants stated that she did not go into classrooms because she felt uncomfortable doing so and that she felt that teachers should be knowledgeable enough about R/WI to provide R/WI to their own students.

11.e. With regards to the services describe in d. above: What worked?

When the responses for "what worked" and "what didn't work" were compared, a contradiction became apparent. Therefore, the responses will be presented to each of these questions, and then a possible rational for the contradiction.

Five Project members noted that consultation, collaboration and other cooperative activities worked best. Some examples of their comments were:

a. "talking to other teachers gives you a spark, new ideas when you may be running out of ideas.";

b. "working with people who request services or who volunteer to be in R/WI was most successful.";

c. "strategy sharing had the most positive response."; and,

d. "the consultative - collaborative approach is a powerful instrument for change.".

There were three other comments made:

a. "daily intensive work with small groups really works.";

b. "working with kindergarten kids and teacher."; and,

c. "the activity of journal writing and gradually building up expectations really worked well.".

What didn't work?

A number of the responses were related to consultative - collaborative efforts with expansion teachers. In fact, four of the five respondents who stated that these efforts worked best, now noted certain aspects of these efforts did not work. Two participants stated that they had difficulties sharing ideas and strategies with other teachers. Two others felt that once the expansion teachers realized that children would not be removed from their classroom, they became disinterested in R/WI. Another comment noted that frequent meetings with expansion teachers did not work. Finally, it was mentioned that doing activities that were not part of the expansion teachers' classroom programs did not work.

One of the participants felt that small group activities led to student over-dependency. It was felt by one individual that having contact with expansion teachers' children once per cycle did not work. Another stated that "R/WI is definitely a good early intervention program, but time is not best spent going into Grade Two rooms because the program isn't geared for those children who already have a certain amount of skill and have very definite ideas about reading and who are a little more set in their ways."

On a positive note, one of the participants felt that all of the activities she tried regarding the expansion of the Project worked.

Comparison of "what worked" and "what didn't work" responses. - When asked "what worked", two-thirds of the comments indicated that consultative - collaborative activities were effective. Yet, when asked "what didn't work", approximately two-thirds of the comments concerned difficulties collaborating with expansion teachers.

When this contradiction was noted, the raw data were re-examined. The authors now believe that the responses to the "what worked" question reflect the positive feelings the participants have about their skills and knowledge. However, the responses in the "what didn't work" question appear to represent their dissatisfaction with teacher reactions to their expansion efforts.

The participants' comments provided two possible reasons for the contradiction about consultative-collaborative efforts. First, they noted that the other teachers in their building had not been adequately exposed to the goals of the R/WI Project and, therefore, had expectations not commensurate with these goals. Second, the participants noted that the problem might have been caused by the provision of services that did not match what was being done in the expansion teachers' classrooms.

When all of the information from the interviews was considered, the University staff felt that some additional factors might also be influencing participant responses. They believe that the most significant factor was likely the professional and personal bonds that developed between the R/WI partners. A professional bond had also developed amongst the members of the Project. When the Project stated that the consultative-collaborative relationship was "what worked", they were likely making reference to those 'bonds' rather than their relationship with the expansion teachers.

Second, the authors believe the Project did not adequately consider the need to teach consultation skills. This might have resulted in the participants being less than satisfied with their expansion efforts with other teachers and resulted in more negative comments.

Thus, the apparent contradiction between the "what worked" and "what didn't work" responses.

This explanation for the contradiction provides some important insights for those planning similar projects:

What would you do differently?

Three participants stated that there wasn't much they would change. Comments about what should be done differently included:

a. we needed to provide more strategy/idea sharing meetings with expansion teachers (4 respondents);

b. before we provided strategies or instructional ideas, we needed to have meetings that introduced the philosophy of R/WI to the expansion teachers (2 respondents);

c. "I would have less frequent, but longer meetings with expansion teachers and other staff" (1 respondent);

d. there needed to be more R/WI inservicing by outside consultants or University staff (3 respondents);

e. follow-up of students from previous years should not be done by the classroom teachers, but by the resource teachers (1 respondent);

f. children should be moved out of the R/WI group more rapidly (1 respondent); and,

g. the program should be begin with students in Kindergarten (1 respondent).

Summary. - There were four major findings reported in this section of the report. First, all Project participants were involved in expanding R/WI to additional classrooms within their home school. The data support the conclusion that the participants were very active in meeting one of the major goals for the Project - the expansion of R/WI concepts and strategies to other classrooms.

Second, six participants indicated that they had worked with children in expansion or other teachers' classrooms. This contradicts one of the Project goals which was the

empowering of other teachers (i.e., helping them to become able to prevent or deal with problems). By providing a direct service to expansion teachers' students, the authors suspect that the R/WI participants hindered the spread effect originally intended. In fact, the comments of four participants indicated they had discovered this on their own. This is probably another example of the difficulties created by the failure of the Project planners to include a consultation - collaboration training component for R/WI participants. Therefore, it is not surprising that difficulty consulting with extension teachers was encountered, and that the participants resorted to providing direct services to students.

Third, the majority of participants felt they had been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with expansion teachers. Three stated they had not. Even though the majority felt there was adequate time for consultation, they did not think that there had been enough group meetings or inservices by outside consultants.

Finally, five participants commented that consultation, collaboration and other cooperative activities were what worked best. As indicated in a previous section, the authors believe the consultative-collaborative and other cooperative activities mentioned were amongst group members and school partners. Four of the above participants also commented that certain aspects of their consultation, collaboration and cooperation with extension teachers were "what didn't work." This contradiction was discussed earlier.

Student Progress.

One of the Project goals for Year Two was to collect and maintain data on R/WI children in accordance with school division guidelines for evaluation. Questions 12.a. and 12.b. collected participant impressions concerning their ability to collect this information and their impressions of student benefits.

12.a. Have you been able to obtain any feedback on last year's students? If so, what is your impression of their performance?

Four respondents stated they had been able to obtain feedback about last year's students. The other four said they had not be able to, but noted that they were able to get some information in an incidental fashion (i.e., through student referrals to resource and staff room conversations). Respondent comments have been organized according to school.

School 1. - Both participants stated they had been able to obtain feedback about last year's R/WI students. They commented that four children were "keeping up" or "holding their own" in Grade Two. They also noted that another "student shines in the Grade Two classroom." "One child is having trouble reading and has been referred to a reading clinician." Finally, they mentioned that two students had moved.

School 2. - One participant stated they had obtained feedback, but the other indicated they had only gotten information incidentally. One participant stated only one R/WI student from Year One was still attending the school, and noted that he (a) was more sure of himself, (b) sees himself as a learner, (c) was reticent last year, but is now willing to take more risks, and, (d) was doing nicely.

The other participant indicated that two students were still attending the Project school. She stated that one student was doing quite well, but not at grade level. The student was learning and wasn't "sticking out/falling behind." The other student was portrayed as having a much better attitude than last year and able to do more complex tasks. This participant stated that this information "made me feel good about the Project."

School 3. - Neither of these teachers obtained feedback about last year's R/WI students. However, the resource teacher has seen one student on a referral basis. Both participants indicated that this child had improved some, but was still not doing well. One participant noted that the child had been "diagnosed as having a learning disorder."

School 4. - Once again, one participant indicated she had obtained feedback and the other stated they had acquired it only incidentally. The resource teacher stated she had only seen students who had been referred for service. Those would only be students that still had problems.

The classroom teacher stated one child was still having the same problems and was missing school often. However, she also noted that "sometimes _____ would read accurately." She stated that two

other children "weren't doing badly" and noted that one was "more independent when writing." Her final comment was "I don't know if they're all doing as well as I'd like, especially _____ and _____." One child has moved out of the school.

12.b. Do you feel that their involvement in the Project last year was beneficial? What is the basis for your impressions?

Seven participants stated that they felt the Year One students had benefitted from their involvement in the R/WI Project. The other participant stated that because she was new to the Project she was unable to answer this question. The following comments were made about student benefits.

a. "Definitely - thinking of where they were academically and where they ended up, it was certainly worthwhile. However, I am concerned that they are not receiving the same level of support as last year."

b. "Three out of four students did benefit. The fourth student was diagnosed with a learning disability. However, compared to kids this year, they didn't make the same gains. This year I could focus more on the kids and less on learning new philosophy or strategies."

c. "The program improved his self-esteem."

d. "I don't think that the Project was solely it, but I think that it had a lot to do with it. The emphasis on finding out what the kid can do and going from there is a really wonderful thing and it works! You can see the kids came back feeling good about themselves. There was a change in attitude in six or seven kids. They began to see themselves as readers and writers."

e. "A lot more independent and confident in own abilities."

f. "They seemed to be no longer one of those massively "at-risk" students."

g. "Beneficial for all. All made gains, even the child who needs more intervention will have already tried a number of things. For the other children it has made them able to function in an age appropriate placement, and in one case, to excel."

Summary. - It was evident that formal follow-up procedures had not been implemented. Even though half the participants state they were able to obtain feedback, their comments indicated that this information was obtained on an informal basis. This might result in Project evaluation problems.

Many R/WI students moved out of the Project schools. This seems to be an annual problem and it will likely hinder the evaluation of student outcome goals.

Most of the responses portrayed the Year One R/WI students as doing well or keeping up with their present classes. Many comments showed the participants to be enthusiastic about the progress some students had made.

All of the Project members thought the Project had benefitted the Year One R/WI students. Many of their comments seemed to indicate that they felt "good" about how much they had been able to help the students. The data support the conclusion that the participants believe the student outcome goals for the Project are being met.

School and Classroom Conditions Needing Change or Improvement.

The reasons for collecting the following data seem self-evident. One of the basic tenets of the Project is that teachers and those in charge of our schools have the capacity to improve their own pedagogical understandings and skills, and thereby improve school conditions. Therefore , questions 13 and 14 attempt to establish:

- what school or Project conditions the participants thought should be changed; and,
- if and how the Project had helped the participants clarify their own ideas about how to improve their classrooms or schools.

13. This Project was based on the belief that schools and teachers have the capacity to improve themselves, if conditions are right. To sustain improvement in the schools and teachers involved in this Project, what conditions in your school or Project do you think need change or improvement?

All the participants had suggestions to make. The main topics commented on were (a) contact with expansion teachers; (b) administrative support and involvement; and, (c) instructional and professional materials.

Contact with expansion staff. - Three noted that there needed to be more scheduled meetings for the Project participants and the expansion teachers in each school. The need for more interaction between the original Project participants and the expansion teachers was reflected in other comments. Three of the respondents noted that the R/WI program needs to be viewed as a school-wide project, and another stated that they needed to "get into more classrooms with R/WI - it is the route to take."

Administrative support and involvement. - Comments from participants at three of the Project schools called for more administrative support and involvement. Another comment stated that the "administration needed to give teachers more power and allow them to do what they think is right."

Instructional and professional materials. - There were five comments made related to adding to or replacing existing materials. Four of these were made by the participants from one school.

On a related note, there were two other comments made about the need for a more equitable sharing of resources amongst the original participants and the expansion teachers. One participant felt that this need had caused resentment within the staff at her school.

Two participants also noted that if Project participants were to continue to grow there was also a need for professional materials that would encourage staff to read and grow.

Three other comments related professional growth and development were also made: (a) "teachers need to be encouraged to pursue professional development"; (b) "there should be more inservicing"; and, (c) "more involvement of university personnel to provide a different perspective."

Other comments.

a. "Everybody needs to have high expectations for students."

b. "Participating resource teachers need to be more connected with the classroom teacher."

c. "More support staff are needed. Not necessarily R/WI staff, this is a school-wide issue."

14. Has the Project helped you to clarify your own ideas about how to improve your classroom/school? If yes, please describe how. If no, please discuss why you think this didn't occur.

All eight of the respondents stated that the Project had helped clarify their ideas about how to improve their classroom or school.

The most common theme amongst the resource teacher participants was about the use of a consultative - collaborative or an in-direct service delivery approach. Two state that the Project either "sold" them on or "reconfirmed" their belief in the idea that the "solution is intervention in the classroom." They stated it "solved the dilemma of direct service time" and "is the foundation of a lot of things."

Three of the four classroom teachers made statements that indicated the Project had taught them the need to have clear goals and objectives. Two also noted that they had discovered the need for "workable" evaluation strategies.

Four Project members made statements that indicated that the Project had helped them to become more confident about their professional skills. This comment was typical, "I feel more comfortable with my approach to the whole class than in previous years and I feel also feel more comfortable talking to other teachers."

There were also comments about ideas or strategies they had learned:

a. "the children need lots of writing everyday.";

b. "students should be surrounded with print.";

c. "it is important to have kids reading simple texts from the beginning of the year.";

d. "I learned many strategies for working with small groups and the whole class."; and,

e. "gave me a sense of the order of skills and how they overlap."

Summary. - When considering conditions that needed to be improved or changed, the participants once again mentioned needs related to interactions with expansion teachers. It is obvious that those responsible for the Project need to attend to this area during Year Three.

Other dominant themes about changing or improving conditions were related to the need: (1) for more involvement and stronger support from school administrators; (2) to earmark school funds for adding to or replacing instructional materials; and, (3) to continue to foster and provide for professional development.

All of the participants felt that the Project had helped them to clarify their ideas and that this enhanced their ability to make decisions. Again a few themes dominated their comments. The theme given the most emphasis was the positive outcomes resulting from the provision of services in a consultative-collaborative fashion. They noted that the best way to solve problems was to intervene in the classroom so that teachers can prevent problems and solve those that do occur.

Another common theme was the development and evaluation of goals. Three of the four classroom teachers thought it was important that they had learned the significance of developing clear goals and objectives, and two felt they had learned the need for "workable" evaluation strategies.

Finally, four respondents mentioned that they had developed more confidence in their professional skills. They noted that this made them feel more comfortable about making decisions and sharing information with their peers.

Continuation of the Project.

Two of the major goals of the R/WI Project were the development of (a) sound philosophies about and instructional practices for the teaching of literacy skills, and (b) the

empowerment of teachers as decision-makers. As well, it was hoped that when Project funding and the University staff were withdrawn, the ideas and skills transmitted would continue to have an impact in the participating schools. The final question attempted to collect data about the participants willingness to continue with the Project, and acquire information about their choices.

15. Do you have plans to continue the Project next year? If "no", why not? If "yes", what are your plans?

All eight of the participants stated "yes". One resource teacher, noted that she might not be the one who makes this decision. Another resource teacher, stated she "definitely" would choose to continue, but that her school administrator would make the final decision.

The seven participants who stated "yes", all provided plans for next year. These data are organized by school to provide a more accurate picture of participant plans.

School A. - At this school one participant gave a definite yes and the other stated "I think yes." This may be due to the involvement each had in developing next year's plan.

Both participants noted that a new proposal for language arts was being developed, and that it incorporated many R/WI ideas. One participant indicated she had not been involved in the development of the proposal and that the other participant would "drive the program." It was mentioned that education assistants would be hired and trained to work in the new program. Using this new format, the classroom teacher would only be responsible for her classroom. The other participant stated that she was "sold on it" and felt "that it needs to get out to other classrooms more."

School B. - Both participants from this school stated yes. For next year, only informal plans have been developed.

One participant noted that next year she planned to continue using what she had already learned.

The other stated that she would like to continue the Project with Grade Three students, but that teaching and support staff were "in flux." She noted that she was not interested in doing whole class work while the other teacher does small group work - "I don't want to be a substitute in the classroom." She didn't think that made the best use of her skills.

School C. - The participants from this school stated they planned to continue with the Project. A plan for next year has not been developed, but one will be written.

Both were unsure if the program would continue in the same format as this year, but both would like some aspects to remain the same. One stated she would like to spend more time introducing R/WI strategies to Kindergarten teachers and students. The other stated she would like to provide less direct service to expansion teachers' students.

School D. - One participant stated she would definitely be involved, but the other indicated the school administrator would make this decision.

This school was also developing as school-wide language arts proposal. One participant was worried that the proposal would dictate what teachers had to do, rather than empowering them to make decisions that were appropriate for their individual context. She thought that this would reduce the teachers' ability to differentiate instruction based on individual student need.

Another thing mentioned was that there wasn't enough money to provide supplies/materials to extend the Project. Suggested that in future projects all the resource money should not be expended in the first year.

Summary. - All Project members indicated a desire to continue in the Project, but a few noted that it they would probably not be the ones making the decision.

Two schools are involved in incorporating R/WI into school-wide language arts proposals. At each of these schools there were some concerns about where this might lead. The main issue was that a school-wide plan could "dictate" what teachers do rather than empowering them to make decisions.

At the time of the interviews, only one school had written their Year Three plan.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the teacher interviews, it was concluded that while there were some minor problems in the Project, overall *it was a success*. The comments of the participating teachers were positive. *The goals and objectives of the Project have been or are being met.*

Recommendation.

1. Based on the results of the teacher interviews, the R/WI Project should be continued in 1991-92.

An examination of the interview data concerning various facets of the Project led to the following conclusions and recommendations.

Meetings.

With regard to the participant controlled monthly meetings, consensus was that *meetings were valuable, worthwhile and/or helpful.* Strategy sharing was an activity that was seen as being of particular value and is mentioned in response to several interview questions. The participants also felt *responsible for their own destiny and welcomed this responsibility.*

However, at times the participants noted that they encountered some difficulties with the smooth running of the meetings. Most of the complaints were related to: (1) problems encountered with establishing meeting agendas; (2) staying on task once agendas had been established; and, (3) some problems caused by what appeared to be competitiveness among the schools.

Finally, the personnel changes which occurred at two of the Project schools resulted in some problems of continuity and created problems with initial group meetings. Both new and continuing group members reported dissatisfaction with the orientation given to the new group members. A number of participants reported that a better orientation should have provided. Furthermore, some of the original participants reported that they had difficulties dealing with the competing philosophies and different knowledge bases of the new members.

Recommendations.

2. **Participant meetings should continue in 1991-92, but on a less frequent basis.**

3. **The first item of business for the group should be the development of tentative goals and objectives for the 1991-92 group meetings.**

4. **Staff replacements should be provided with a comprehensive overview of Project philosophies and goals.**

5. **New administrators should also be provided with a comprehensive overview of Project philosophies and goals.**

Professional Skills.

Based on the teacher interviews, it can be concluded that *the "teacher-as-decision-maker" goal of the Project is becoming a reality. Growth in self-confidence, professional skills and the tolerance of individual differences are all evident*, and these changes represent the *development of abilities necessary to making effective instructional change.*

Recommendation.

7. **The participants should continue to be given responsibility for determining their future professional development needs.**

8. **In determining these needs the participants should continue to use the "teacher-as-decision-maker" approach.**

University Personnel.

Even though there were a number of contradictory suggestions concerning University involvement, it is obvious that the participants *wanted them to become more involved at the classroom level.* The participants stated that they felt *comfortable interacting with the University staff*, and *did not feel threatened by their presence in either the meetings or their classrooms.* The authors believe that these feelings stem from the fact that the University staff have served as individual sounding boards for the teachers rather than as authorities having control or power over them and their programs.

Finally, half of the teachers noted that the University staff should have been regular participants in the group meetings. However, even when discussing group meeting attendance, the participants stated that they felt *it was more important that University staff visit their classrooms*. In fact, one respondent suggested that specific times should be scheduled for classroom visits during Year Three.

Recommendations.

9. **At the first group meeting the participants should decide on whether or not they want the University staff to attend these meetings. University staff should be notified of the group's decision.**

10. **Regularly scheduled classroom visits by University staff should be reinstated. The classroom visitation schedule should be developed collaboratively at the second group meeting of 1991-92.**

Inner City Initiative and Principal Support.

A *high level of satisfaction was expressed for the support provided by the Inner City Initiative Branch*, however, there was a desire for more active support on the part of school administrators. Specifically, participants would like principals to be more visible, to provide more in-school support for the Project, and to take the time to discuss the program with them.

Recommendations.

11. **Inner City Initiative Branch should continue to provide the same level of support as in the past.**

12. **At the initial staff meeting for the year, school administrators should discuss the goals, objectives and implementation plans for Year Three of the Project.**

13. **School administrators should devote more time actively promoting the extension of the Project.**

14. **School administrators should be more involved in the R/WI meetings and discussions held in their schools.**

Classroom Teacher - Resource Teacher Relationships.

There was *overwhelming support for the collaborative aspect of the Project* . The participants felt that collaboration *helped to produce the outcomes they desired* and *provided them with a partner they could trust.* However, the collaborative relationships established at each school were quite different.

The only negative responses were directed at the perceived lack of time available for consultation and collaboration with their partner. The participants noted that collaboration was essential, but that if they had had more time they could have been more effective.

In the authors' opinions, the *data support the idea that the more active the participants are in making school level decisions, the better the odds are for continued action and support after the Project initiators leave the scene.*

Recommendations.

15. **The partnership between the classroom and resource teacher was established to provide each school with well trained Project initiators who would support each others activities. This partnership should continue.**

16. **The partnership, however, must change. The resource teacher should spend more time expanding the Project to other classrooms and less time working in the original R/WI classroom.**

17. **Means should be found, using existing school resources, to provide the participants [i.e., original and expansion participants] with more collaboration time.**

R/WI Classroom Activities.

All sites indicated that they were providing R/WI activities for the *whole class* and a *select group of students.* A *wide variety of activities* were being used. Writing as a process and shared reading strategies were mentioned by a majority of the participants. *The activities that were used for the whole class were often modified for use with selected R/WI students.*

A number of participants noted that this year's activities differed from last year's due to differences in student needs. Other comments suggested that in Year Two participants *placed more emphasis on reading activities*. Other program changes were related to the arrival of Project funded materials.

Though *none of the schools used identical student selection criteria*, there were similarities. At three sites, two select groups were cycled through the R/WI process and at the fourth site, three groups were involved in the Project. Group size varied from two to six students, and some students were involved in more than one cycle. *The most common explanation for changes in group membership was student mastery of objectives*. At some sites student mobility created difficulties.

Recommendations.

18. Continue the use of R/WI procedures with the whole class and not just a select group of R/WI students.

19. R/WI procedures should continue to be modified and adapted to meet the needs of individual students and the classroom context in which the students reside.

20. R/WI assessment/evaluation procedures should continue to be modified and adjusted to reflect the goals and objectives of the individual classroom teacher and each participating school.

21. For students transferring to other schools, information concerning their participation and achievements in reading and writing should be (a) mailed to the receiving schools and (b) given to the parents or guardians.

R/WI Expansion Activities.

There were four major findings reported in this section of the report. First, *all eight of the Project participants were involved in expanding R/WI to additional classrooms* within their home school. The data support the conclusion that the participants were very active in meeting one of the major goals for the Project - the expansion of R/WI concepts and strategies to other classrooms.

Second, six participants indicated that they had worked with children in expansion or other teachers' classrooms. This contradicts one of the Project goals which was the empowering of other teachers (i.e., helping them to become able to prevent or deal with problems). By providing a direct service to expansion teachers' students, the authors suspect the R/WI participants hindered the spread effect originally intended. In fact, the comments of four participants indicated they had *discovered this on their own.* This is probably another example of the difficulties created by the failure of the Project planners to *include a consultation - collaboration training component for R/WI participants.* Therefore, it is not surprising that difficulty consulting with extension teachers was encountered, and that the participants resorted to providing direct services to students.

Third, the majority of participants felt they *had been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with expansion teachers.* Three stated they had not. Even though the majority felt there was adequate time for consultation, they did not think that there had been enough group meetings or inservices by outside consultants.

Finally, five participants commented that *consultation, collaboration and other cooperative activities were what worked best.* As indicated in a previous section, the authors believe the consultative-collaborative and other cooperative activities mentioned were amongst group members and school partners. Four of the above participants also commented that certain aspects of their consultation, collaboration and cooperation with extension teachers were 'what didn't work." This contradiction was discussed earlier.

Recommendations.

22. The expansion of the Project to other classrooms must be on a voluntary basis if the "teacher-as-decision-maker" is to continue to be primary goal. The data suggest that this is one of the critical components in improving student performance.

23. The philosophies, goals, objectives and procedures of the Project should continue to be expanded to other classrooms.

24. **The participants should cease or drastically reduce the provision of direct-service to children in expansion classrooms. The goals for Project expansion called for the development of independent, decision-making skills in all teachers. Continued direct-service to students will reduce the likelihood of teachers developing those skills and increase the probability of their becoming dependent on support services.**

25. **Participants stated that consultation, collaboration and other cooperative activities were "what worked" best within their group, but they also commented that certain aspects of their consultation, collaboration and cooperation with extension teachers was "what didn't work." It appears that this problem stems from the fact that the Project did not anticipate the need to teach participants how to consult and collaborate with other teachers. Therefore, a training component for the development of these skills should be considered.**

Student Progress.

It was evident that *formal follow-up procedures had not been implemented.* Even though half the participants *state they were able to obtain feedback, their comments indicated that this information was obtained on an informal basis.* This might result in Project evaluation problems.

Many R/WI students moved out of the Project schools. This seems to be an annual problem and it *will likely hinder the evaluation of student outcome goals.*

Most of the *responses portrayed the Year One R/WI students as doing well or keeping up with their present classes.* Many comments showed the participants to be *enthusiastic about the progress* some students had made.

All of the participants thought the Project had benefitted the Year One R/WI students. Many of their comments seemed to indicate that they *felt "good"* about how much they had been able to help the students. The responses support the conclusion that *the participants believe the student outcome goals for the Project are being met.*

Recommendation.

26. Formal follow-up procedures for each school should be developed and these should correspond with the suggestions made in Recommendation #20.

School and Classroom Conditions Needing Change or Improvement.

When considering conditions that needed to be improved or changed, the participants once again mentioned *needs related to interactions with expansion teachers*. It is obvious that those responsible for the Project need to attend to this area during Year Three.

Other dominant themes about changing or improving conditions were related to the need: (1) for *more involvement and stronger support from school administrators*; (2) to *earmark school funds for adding to or replacing instructional materials*; and, (3) to *continue to foster and provide for professional development*.

All of the participants felt that the *Project had helped them to clarify their ideas and that this enhanced their ability to make decisions*. Again a few themes dominated their comments. The theme given the most emphasis was that *positive outcomes resulted from the provision of services in a consultative-collaborative fashion*. They noted that the best way to help students was to intervene in the classroom so that teachers learn to prevent future difficulties and solve those that do occur.

Another common theme was the development and evaluation of goals. Three of the four classroom teachers thought it was *important that they had learned the significance of developing clear goals and objectives*, and two felt they had *learned the need for "workable" evaluation strategies*.

Finally, four participants mentioned that they had *developed more confidence in their professional skill*. They noted that this made them feel *more comfortable about making decisions and sharing information with their peers*.

Recommendations.

27. **The school divisions should earmark funds for adding to and replacing existing language arts materials in <u>all</u> classrooms.**

28. **Professional development efforts should continue and be based on the teachers' perceptions of their professional needs.**

<u>Continuation of the Project</u>.

All participants indicated a desire to continue in the Project, but a few noted that it they would probably not be the ones making the decision.

Two schools are involved in incorporating R/WI into school-wide language arts proposals. At each of these schools there were some concerns about where this might lead. The main issue was that *a school-wide plan could "dictate" what teachers do rather than empowering them to make decisions*.

At the time of the interviews, only one school had written their Year Three plan.

Recommendations.

29. **The development of school or divisional projects/plans should not detract from the teachers' role as decision makers or their empowerment.**

30. **A date should be established for the submission of yearly plans for extension of the Project.**

APPENDIX A
TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

READING/WRITING IMMERSION: A DECISION MAKING LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

TEACHER INTERVIEW
YEAR TWO

March, 1991

One of the conditions of the funding for this Project is that it be evaluated. The purpose of this interview is to collect information from classroom teachers and resource teachers in order to provide evaluative information to the funder and also to provide information that will assist in making improvements, if needed, to the Project. As previously discussed with you, **all responses will be kept completely confidential!**

The interview questions will be read and scored by the assigned research assistant. Only compiled data will be shared, not the individual answers. After the data has been compiled, it will be shared with you at one of our meetings.

Please listen to each question carefully. If you would like me to repeat a question, I will do so. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. If you have any questions concerning the interview, please feel free to ask me, or to call Paul Madak (474-8712), or Gerry Bravi (474-8772). We would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to assist us in the very important task of evaluating the Reading/Writing Immersion Project.

1. With regard to Year Two, R/WI group meetings, what might have been done during Year One to improve the quality of these meetings? [e.g., Would it have helped if a schedule for Year Two meetings had been drawn up last year?]

2. If you had a chance to improve the organization of the group meetings, what would you change to bring about this improvement?

3. Given that this was a collaborative Project, were you satisfied with the role you played in organizing and developing agendas for the group meetings? Please provide a rationale for your answer.

4. Many things were discussed in the group meetings. Please comment on the value of the content of those discussions [i.e., were the once-a-month meetings worth the time you were away from school?]

5. Has the Project provided you with any new skills this year? If so, what are they?

6. University personnel played a different role in Year One than in Year Two, please comment regarding this difference. [e.g., Were you satisfied with the amount of contacts? In retrospect, would you have changed anything for Year Two?]

7. What role do you feel the University personnel should play during the third year of the Project?

8. What is your opinion of the support the R/WI Project received from Inner City and your principal in Year Two?

9. Cooperative and collaborative partnership between participating classroom teachers and resource teachers was built into the R/WI Project. Please comment on this cooperation and collaboration with regards to the following areas.

   a. Do you feel that you have been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with your partner

   b Describe the role that each of you played in the Project, and how these roles were determined.

   c. How successful do you feel the consultative - collaborative aspect of the Project has been? Please provide a rationale for this judgment.

   d. If you were starting Year Two over, would you make any changes to the partnership? If yes, what changes would you make?

10a. Are you using R/WI activities with your whole class, a select group, or both?

10b. If with the whole class, describe these activities. Do these activities differ from those used last year, and if so how?

10c. If with a select group, how many children are you working with in your classroom this year? How did you select them?

10d. Has group membership changed during the year? Why or why not?

10e. Describe the R/WI activities that you used with this group? Do these activities differ from those used last year, and if so how?

11a. Describe the R/WI activities you and your counterpart have carried out in additional classroom(s) in your school .

11b. How many other teachers have you worked with; and what grade level[s] do these teachers work?

11c. Do you feel that you have been given adequate time to consult and collaborate with other teachers?

11d. Describe the R/WI services you have provided to the teacher(s) and children [e.g., observing; ideas; etc.]

11e. With regards to the services describe in d above:

i. What worked?

ii. What didn't work?

iii. What would you do differently?

12a. Have you been able to obtain any feedback on last year's students? If so, what is your impression of their performance?

12b. Do you feel that their involvement in the Project last year was beneficial? What is the basis for your impressions?

13. This Project was based on the belief that schools and teachers have the capacity to improve themselves, if conditions are right. To sustain improvement in the schools and teachers involved in this Project, what conditions in your school or Project do you think need change or improvement?

14. Has the Project helped you to clarify your own ideas about how to improve your classroom/school? If yes, please describe how. If no, please discuss why you think this didn't occur.

15. Do you have plans to continue the Project next year? If "no", why not? If "yes", what are your plans?